

II. Remarks In Response to the Office Action

A. General Remarks

Claims 6 and 44-51 were pending in the application prior to this Reply. New claims 52-75 have been added so that claims 6 and 44-75 are pending.

B. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 46-47 and 49 are objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claim 6, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim 6 and any intervening claims.

In response, new independent claims 52, 60, and 68 have been added and correspond respectively to claims 46, 47, and 49 rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 6. In addition, new dependent claims 53-59, 61-67, and 69-75 have been added to depend respectively from new independent claims 52, 60, and 68. These new dependent claims 53-59, 61-67, and 69-75 are fully supported by claims 44-51 and do not add new matter. Accordingly, claims 52-75 are believed to be allowable, and Assignee respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance as the next paper from the Office.

C. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 6, 44-45, 48, and 50-51 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Hefner (US 5,186,659).

Assignee respectfully traverses the contention that Hefner anticipates claims 6, 44-45, 48, and 50-51 insofar as Hefner fails to teach or suggest all of the claimed elements in independent claim 6. "For a prior art reference to anticipate in terms of 35 U.S.C. 102, every element of the claimed invention must be identically shown in a single reference." *Diversitech Corp. v. Century Steps, Inc.*, 850 F.2d 675, 677, 7 U.S.P.Q.2d 1315, 1317 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Furthermore, the "identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the patent claim" (*Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 U.S.P.Q.2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989), *cert. denied*, 493 U.S. 853 (1989)), and the "elements must be arranged as in the claim

under review” (*In re Bond*, 910 F.2d 831, 832, 15 U.S.P.Q.2d 1566, 1567 (Fed. Cir. 1990), *reh’g denied*, 1990 U.S. App. LEXIS 19971 (Fed. Cir. 1990)). *See also* M.P.E.P. 2131. Therefore, for Hefner to anticipate claim 6, Hefner must disclose each element contained in the claim, and there must be no difference between the claimed invention and the disclosure of Hefner.

Hefner discloses a light bulb adapter apparatus (10) having an adapter head (13) for connecting with a light socket and having socket members (19) for holding light bulbs. For each socket member (19), first and second mounting tubes (20 & 21) telescopically interconnect the socket member (19) with the adapter head (13). *See* Hefner at col. 4:8-16 and FIG. 6. In addition, collapsible and extendable bellows (22) are arranged coextensively between the adapter head (13) and the socket member (19) to accommodate the extension and collapse of the first tube (20) relative to the second tube (21). *See* Hefner at col. 4:20-24 and FIG. 6. Therefore, each of the mounting tubes (20 & 21) and bellows (22) in Hefner is adapted to limit the motion of each socket member (19) either closer or farther from an axis of the adapter head (13) as illustrated below in the following FIGURE.

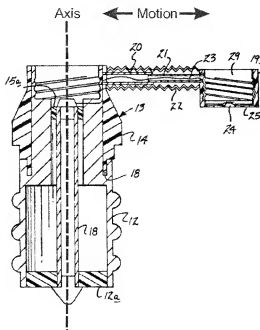


FIGURE: Motion of socket (19) relative to axis of adapter head (13) in Hefner

By contrast, claim 6 recites a connector comprising first, second, and third connector heads. The first connector head has an axis. A connection mechanism couples the first connector head and the second connector head, and *the connection mechanism is adapted to limit the motion of the second connector head in a first plane substantially coincident with the axis and in a second plane substantially orthogonal to the axis*. In addition, *the connection mechanism is adapted to limit motion of the third connector head to the first and second planes*, and the second and third connector heads are adapted to move independent of each other.

Accordingly, Hefner fails to teach or suggest a connection mechanism that is adapted to limit the motion of a second connector head in a first plane substantially coincident with an axis of a first connector head and in a second plane substantially orthogonal to the axis and that is adapted to limit motion of the third connector head to the first and second planes. At most, Hefner discloses three socket members (19) connected by tubes (20 & 21) and bellows (22) to a central adapter head (13) so that the three socket members (19) can extend and collapse in one plane relative to the central adapter head (13). See Hefner at col. 4:20-24 and FIG. 6. Therefore, Hefner does not teach or suggest each claimed element of independent claim 6 and cannot anticipate claim 6. For at least these reasons, claim 6 and those claims 44-51 depending therefrom are believed to be allowable, and Assignee respectfully requests allowance of claims 6 and 44-51 in the next paper from the Office.

D. Conclusion

The claim amendments made in this Reply result in a total of four (4) independent claims and thirty-three (33) total claims pending in this application. It is believed that these claim amendments does not add any additional independent claims or any additional total claims beyond which fees have already been paid. This Reply was due on 04 July 2006. Because July 4th was a Federal Holiday, this Reply is being timely filed on 05 July 2006. Therefore, no fees are believed due. However, should any fees be required for any reason, the undersigned

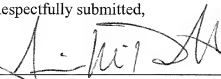
authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees that may be required to Deposit Account No. 501922, referencing order no. 175-0002US.

To facilitate the resolution of any issues or questions presented by this paper, Assignee respectfully requests that the Examiner directly contact the undersigned by phone to further the discussion, reconsideration, and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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